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Community Health News

Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern Faculty Assess Disease Intervention Specialist Education for the Future

July 14, 2017



Georgia Southern assesses alignment of two accredited public health curricula with Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) tasks and knowledge. The articulation of standardized competencies targeting DIS is of utmost importance. DIS standardized credentialing is more important now than ever before given focused attention on intervention, disease surveillance due to emerging disease threats such as Zika and H1N1, and the successful continuous quality improvement movement for standardization through the work of the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).

The DIS workforce, largely employed within local and state public health departments, serves as a vital component in assuring the health of the public. There are an estimated 1,661 DIS (1,404 filled positions) within the nation's current workforce and 400 DIS supervisors. A comprehensive job task analysis was recently completed by PSI Services, LLC, through a collaborative agreement between the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This job task analysis served as the foundation for the mapping of public health course content with DIS tasks and knowledge criteria completed in this analysis.

Four research faculty conducted a gap analysis utilizing eleven core BSPH courses and six core MPH courses, and identified gaps with DIS task and knowledge statements. Recommendations were based upon these identified gaps and future strategies to address these gaps.

Dr. Bill Mase, assistant professor of health policy and management, Dr. Andrew Hansen, assistant professor of community health, Dr. Stacy Smallwood, assistant professor of community health, Dr. Gulzar Shah, department chair of health policy and management, and Ms. Angie Peden, assistant director of the center for public health practice and research at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University worked closely with Dr. Kaye Bender, president and CEO of the Public Health Accreditation Board on the commissioned paper.

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